

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method of alleviating problems associated with delays in accessing data on a network, comprising the steps of:

- (a) accessing data on a network from a client computer;
- (b) identifying when a delay occurs during the accessing step; and
- (c) presenting filler contents on the client computer during the identified delay, wherein the filler contents are customized to a user's taste.

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2. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are pre-selected.

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3. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are selected from a group comprising text data, graphics data, audio data, and audiovisual data.

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4. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are selected from a group comprising static filler contents and dynamic filler contents.

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5. The method of claim 1 above, further comprising the step of automatically selecting the filler content based on predetermined criteria.

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6. The method of claim 5 above, wherein the filler contents are selected based on the accessed data.

1 7. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are stored on
2 the client computer.

independent
1 8. The method of claim 7 above, further comprising the step of storing the
2 filler contents in a repository on the client computer.

1 9. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are stored on a
2 server computer connected to the network.

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1 10. The method of claim 9 above, further comprising the step of retrieving
2 the filler content from the server computer connected to the network.

1 11. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the identifying step is performed
2 either at the client computer or at a server computer connected to the network

1 12. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the presenting step further
2 comprises the step of presenting the filler contents without interrupting the accessing
3 of the data from the network.

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1 13. The method of claim 1 above, further comprising the step of
2 deactivating the presenting step when the accessing of the data on the network is
3 complete.

1 14. A computer program carrier readable by a computer and embodying
2 one or more instructions that executable by the computer to perform method steps for
3 alleviating problems associated with delays in accessing data on a network, the method
4 comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) accessing data on a network from a client computer;
6 (b) identifying when a delay occurs during the accessing step; and
7 (c) presenting filler contents on the client computer during the identified delay,
8 wherein the filler contents are customized to a user's taste.

1 15. An apparatus for alleviating problems associated with delays in accessing
2 data on a network, comprising:

- 3 (a) a client computer connected to the network;
4 (b) a browser, executed by the client computer, for accessing data on the
5 network; and
6 (c) a filler engine, executed by the client computer, for presenting filler content
7 on the client computer when a delay occurs in the accessing of the data on the
8 network, , wherein the filler contents are customized to a user's taste.

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1 16. The apparatus of claim 15 above, further comprising a content receiver
2 for retrieving the filler content from a server on the network.

1 17. The apparatus of claim 16 above, wherein the filler engine requests the
2 filler contents from the content receiver and the content receiver retrieves the filler
3 contents from a server on the network for the filler engine.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 15 above, further comprising a repository, stored
2 on the client computer, for storing the filler contents.

1 19. The apparatus of claim 18 above, further comprising a content receiver
2 for retrieving the filler content from a server on the network and for storing the
3 retrieved filler content in the repository.

1 20. The apparatus of claim 19 above, wherein the filler engine further
2 comprises means for retrieving the filler content from the repository.

1 21. The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine further
2 comprises means for initiating use of the filler content when appropriate.

1 22. The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine is an
2 extension to the browser.

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2006-04-17

1 23. The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine is a
2 component separate from the browser.

1 24. The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine displays the
2 filler contents without interrupting the accessing of the data from the network.

1 25. The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine deactivates
2 when the accessing of the data from the network is complete.

1 26. The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein a server on the network
2 transmits the delay information through the browser to the filler engine and the filler
3 engine retrieves the filler contents from the repository in response thereto.

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